

Dispute over James Brown presentation

A MAJOR CONTROVERSY has developed over James Brown's visit to Britain in early March, plans for which were revealed in last week's NME. At that time, Contempo International issued details of dates and venues they had set for Brown, but on Monday promoter Danny O'Donovan released a statement claiming that he would be solely responsible for the tour. He added: "I am the only person to be involved in the U.K. presentation of James Brown... and I hold all appropriate signed contracts."

A spokesman for Contempo told the NME: "We had the whole thing confirmed by cable from America, which is why we released details. Needless to say, we have complained to the States in the strongest possible terms, and we are seeking legal advice on the matter."

As a further complication, Contempo had asked for advance postal bookings to be sent direct to them. And on Monday, they commented: "We have already received a large number of bookings. But although Danny O'Donovan now seems to be promoting Brown's visit, the dates and venues remain unchanged, so we have forwarded on all applications to the theatres concerned."

To counteract this, O'Donovan declared: "I must stress at once that two of the dates and venues announced by Contempo are wrong. I cannot yet release full information about the proper tour dates at this time, but James Brown will not be playing at either the Brixton Sundown or Manchester Belle Vue. I confirm that I have set two shows for him at London Rainbow Theatre as his opening date here on March 1 at 6.30 and 9 p.m."

So Contempo have forwarded ticket applications on to the Brixton and Manchester venues, for apparent non-existent dates there on March 2 and 3 respectively. There is as yet no indication as to how this problem will be resolved.

WISHBONE, KINKS JOIN FANFARE FOR EUROPE

WISHBONE ASH are to headline a concert at London Rainbow Theatre on Wednesday, January 10, supported by the Average White Band — and the Kinks will star at London Drury Lane Theatre Royal on Sunday, January 14, with a support act still to be confirmed. Both these concerts are part of the "Fanfare For Europe" rock festival being promoted by Great Western in association with the Arts Council, and at the request of the British Government, to celebrate this country's entry into the Common Market.

The series of concerts will open at the Rainbow on January 6, when Status Quo top the bill with support from the JSD Band. As reported last week, Slade will headline at the London Palladium on January 7, and they will now be supported by Georgie who topped the recent NME-Red Bus tour.

Reports in the national press suggesting that Free

will star at the London Coliseum on January 5, and the Strawbs at the Rainbow on January 12, are totally inaccurate — according to a Great Western spokesman. But it is understood that one or other of these groups will headline at Hammersmith Odeon on January 12.

Great Western have also booked the Royal Albert Hall for a concert on January 15, and had been planning to present Pentangle there. But because group member Danny Thompson has suffered a heart attack, this will not now be possible. Instead, another group — which it is hoped will meet with the approval of the Albert Hall authorities — is now being negotiated.

Details of one final concert have still to be announced — on Saturday, January 13. Plans for this date will be revealed next week, and Great Western promise that it will be "a really big one".



WISHBONE ASH

Rare Bird lose Karas

RARE BIRD have undergone a personnel change, following their massive 49-date tour of Britain. Bassist Paul Karas has left the outfit to pursue a separate career, and he has been replaced by Nic Potter who was previously with Van Der Graaf Generator and the Roy Young Band. The outfit are this week involved in intensive recording sessions, cutting tracks for a new album, as well as their first single with the new line-up.

Commented founder member Dave Kaffinetti: "Nic's style of playing is ideally suited to the direction the band is now taking. Paul's departure is a personal loss to us all, but we wish him well in the new paths he is following."

Rare Bird commence a European tour in Paris on January 4, subsequently visiting Holland, Belgium and Scandinavia. More British dates will follow in late winter and early spring.

ARGENT: WORLD-WIDE TOURS UNTIL SPRING

ARGENT are in line for a lightning three-day trip to New Zealand in the New Year, to perform at a massive open-air festival in Auckland from January 6, before an estimated audience of 100,000. The band are set for four major concerts in Germany from January 17, and their third U.S. tour is confirmed to open in Chicago on February 2. After four weeks of gigs in the States, the group return home for a fortnight's rest before flying back to America for another month-long itinerary. British dates for Argent this month have been postponed, to enable the band to complete work on their fourth album, for late January release by Epic.

'DING-A-LING' FILM: TV AT CHRISTMAS

THE CONTROVERSIAL film of Chuck Berry performing "My Ding-A-Ling", to which Mrs. Mary Whitehouse objected so strongly, will be included in the two special Christmas editions of BBC-1's "Top Of The Pops". All the 1972 chart-toppers will be featured in the shows — in addition to Berry, these include T. Rex, Slade, Rod Stewart, New Seekers, Gilbert O'Sullivan, Chicory Tip, Nilsson, Don McLean, Donny Osmond, Alice Cooper, David Cassidy, Lieutenant Pigeon and the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.

Producer Jonnie Stewart will also include several "near No. 1 hits" in the two 45-minute shows. All the British artists are recording new clips for these editions, while U.S. performers will be seen in previously-filmed sequences. The Christmas Day edition is introduced by Jimmy Savile and Ed Stewart, and the Boxing Day show by Tony Blackburn and Noel Edmonds. There will be no "Top Of The Pops" on December 28, and the series returns in its usual Thursday slot on January 4.

● The special Boxing Day edition of BBC-2's "Old Grey Whistle Test" will present a montage of highlights from the last series of the show. Artists featured include the Rolling Stones, the Beach Boys, Kris Kristofferson, Roxy Music, Jerry Lee Lewis and the Beatles.

● Among the many movies to be featured on BBC-1 during the holiday period is the TV premiere of "West Side Story", regarded by many critics as the finest film musical ever made.

● Tom Jones' BBC-1 Christmas special, plans for which have already been reported exclusively by NME, will be screened on Thursday, December 28. Jones is currently filming location sequences for the show in Switzerland.

● Dave Cash is returning to BBC Radio at the beginning of January, after an absence of 18 months. He is to be the country music presenter on Radio 2 at noon on Saturdays. This is the only change in Radio 1 and 2 schedules for the New Year.

AMERICAN DEBUT BY BLONDEL CONFIRMED

AMAZING BLONDEL are to undertake their first tour of America in the New Year, playing college dates from January 19 to February 12. This is the result of U.S. demand for import copies of their latest Island album "England". The group are now back in action playing dates in this country (see Gig Guide), following the curtailment of their European tour when thieves stole their van and equipment from outside a hotel in Naples. The van was later recovered minus a brand new PA system and the antique harmonium which has been a familiar feature of their concerts.

NEWS DESK Editor: Derek Johnson



MARY WILSON (left) and LYNDA LAURENCE of the Supremes express their thanks to the NAACP at the Hollywood Palladium last week, after winning the Female Vocal Group of the Year award.

DIANA FILM HONOUR Major Tamla releases set

THE "LADY SINGS THE BLUES" SOUNDTRACK WILL BE ISSUED AS A SPECIAL DOUBLE-ALBUM PACKAGE BY TAMLA MOTOWN ON JANUARY 5. IT WILL INCLUDE AN EIGHT-PAGE COLOUR BOOKLET OF STILLS FROM THE FILM.

DIANA ROSS, widely tipped for an Academy Award for her performance as Billie Holiday in the movie "Lady Sings The Blues", has already collected one Actress of the Year award — she was named last week in the highly respected NAACP Annual Image Awards Presentations at the Hollywood Palladium. And in the same ceremony, the film was acclaimed Motion Picture of the Year.

The awards proved to be a landslide for the Tamla Motown organisation, with five other of their acts winning categories. They were the Jackson 5 (Male Vocal Group of the Year, for the third year running); Stevie Wonder (Producer of the Year for his "Music Of My Mind" album); the Supremes (Female Vocal Group of the Year); the Temptations (Album of the Year with "All Directions"); and Nicholas Ashford and Valerie Simpson (Songwriters of the Year).

The Temptations' single "Papa Was A Rolling Stone", which has already topped the U.S. charts, is released in Britain by Tamla on January 5. Coming out on the same label are "Take Me Girl I'm Ready" by Jr. Walker and the All Stars (January 12) and "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder (January 19). Wonder's latest LP "Talking Book" is issued on January 5, and out the same day is Jermaine Jackson's first solo album titled "Jermaine".

LULU LABEL SWITCH

LULU has left the Atlantic label and has signed with Wes Farrell's Chelsea Records. Her first album under the new deal will be released in mid-January, and she will undertake a major American tour in early spring to promote it. The Chelsea label is manufactured and distributed by RCA.

Lanchester Festival: the line-up for 1973

THE ANNUAL Lanchester Arts Festival — the event at which Chuck Berry recorded his "My Ding-A-Ling" hit earlier this year — will open on January 26. Negotiations are currently in hand for the appearance of a major rock band or artist, of the same calibre as Berry, although details will not be confirmed until the New Year. One of the highlights of the event will be a Charisma Record night on February 2, topped by Genesis with support from String Driven Thing.

The opening night of the festival features a traditional blues concert with Homesick James, Whistling Alex Moore, Lightnin' Slim, Whispering Smith, Washboard Willie and Boogie Woogie Red. The following day (27) Scaffold, Adrian Henri, Roger McGough and Brian Patton present a programme of music and poetry.

Lanchester stages its first-ever pop evening on January 28 with Lovelace Watkins and Bobby Crush, followed by traditional Irish and Welsh nights (29-30). BBC's "Country Meets Folk" will come live from the festival on January 31, with Wally Whyton and the Yetties. And the final of the international guitar contest is scheduled for February 1. Other events have still to be confirmed.

50-MINUTE FEATURE FILM OF YES SHOWS

BOTH CONCERTS by Yes at London Rainbow this weekend (Friday and Saturday) are to be filmed. This will then be edited into a 50-minute feature film, suitable for either TV or cinema screening, which will be used to aid promotion of the band's live double album. The LP was recorded during Yes' tour of America last month, and it will be issued by Atlantic in the early spring. Meanwhile, both Rainbow concerts — as well as the Manchester Hardrock gig on Sunday (17) — are completely sold out.

ALL-STAR 'TOMMY' MAY BE MADE INTO FEATURE FILM

THE ALL-STAR version of Pete Townshend's rock opera "Tommy", which played to two capacity houses at London Rainbow last Saturday, now seems destined to become a full-length feature film. Producer Lou Reizner is at present involved in negotiations which could lead to work starting on a movie adaptation in the spring. It seems unlikely that all the big-name artists involved could be gathered together for a lengthy shooting schedule, but this is not seen as a major obstacle. "We will simply shoot sequences at the convenience of the various performers, wherever they happen to be", explained a spokesman.

Neither has it yet been decided whether the film would feature the Rainbow cast or the album cast — in Saturday's concerts, Peter Sellers and Keith Moon took the roles filled on the LP by Richard Harris and Ringo Starr.

Following the Rainbow triumph, there is now a plan to present a similar all-star charity concert at New York's Madison Square Garden early in the New Year. Sales of the all-star album in America rocketed to the 400,000 mark within a week of its release there, and record executives are now predicting that it could become one of the biggest-selling albums of all time.

PIE — WITH BLACKBERRIES



HUMBLE PIE left London Airport last week at the outset of their three-week American tour, accompanied by the U.S. artists who are augmenting them in the States. Pictured in our line-up are (left to right) GREG RIDLEY, JERRY SHIRLEY, saxist SIDNEY GEORGE, VINETTA FIELDS, DAVE CLEMPSON, BILLIE BARNHUM, STEVE MARRIOTT and CLYDIE KING. As reported in last week's NME, the three

girl singers (known as the Blackberries) and Sidney George will also augment Pie on their spring tour of Britain.

A new Pie album titled "Eat It" will be issued by A & M early in the New Year, one side of which was recorded live during the outfit's last British tour. The set also includes some acoustic songs by Steve Marriott, plus several tracks recorded with the Blackberries.

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RECORDING NEWS

● The High Court has granted a perpetual injunction to six major record companies — Decca, EMI, CBS, MAM, RCA and WEA — restraining Starco (London) Ltd. and Commodore Ltd. from selling pirated 8-track cartridges they had imported from America and were still in their possession. Artists involved included the Beatles, Tom Jones, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Wings, Simon and Garfunkel, the Doors and Neil Diamond.

● MCA are to release the first LP by Peter Bardens' group Camel in late January. Titled simply "Camel", it features the four-man line-up of Bardens (keyboards), Andy Latimer (guitar), Andy Ward (drums) and Doug Ferguson (bass). The band will undertake a major British concert tour, supporting a big-name group, early in the New Year.

● Curved Air, who return today (Thursday) from a two-week Italian tour, go into the studios early in the New Year to record their fourth album. It will be their first LP with new guitarist Kirby and new violinist Eddie Jobson.

● Jackson Heights are to have their "Fifth Avenue Bus" set released in Poland in early spring on the Polish State Records label, and hope to undertake a tour of that country at the same time to aid promotion.

● Stray will be off the road throughout January and February, which they will devote to routing and recording their fourth album.